

had another chance at life because America's first responders were there and answered the call to defend America.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### AMERICA MUST NOT OCCUPY AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the eighth anniversary of one of the most tragic days in America's history, September 11, 2001.

On that day, our Nation was attacked, and nearly 3,000 Americans were killed. We continue to grieve for them and for their families, and tomorrow we celebrate a national day of remembrance and service in their honor and memory.

Soon after 9/11, Mr. Speaker, American troops invaded Afghanistan, where the attacks had been planned. Many Americans have considered the war in Afghanistan a good war. Our troops have shown incredible skill and bravery in a very difficult conflict over those 8 years. But now, 8 years later, our troops are still in Afghanistan and are still facing a growing insurgency. The Taliban appears to have regained control of half the country, and many al Qaeda operatives have fled to Pakistan. As a result, a growing number of Americans now oppose a war that no longer serves our national security interests.

In three recent polls, more Americans called for reductions in our troop levels rather than increases, and in one poll, the majority of Americans said that the war in Afghanistan is simply not worth fighting.

Despite this, General Stanley McChrystal, commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, is expected to ask the President to commit more troops. There are reports that General McChrystal may ask for as many as 30,000 more, which would bring the American troop level to about 100,000. Enlarging the American footprint in Afghanistan, Mr. Speaker, will almost certainly lead the Afghanistan people to see the United States as an occupying force, and if history has taught us anything, it is that the Afghan people will resist any foreign occupation. That is the bitter lesson that the Soviet Union and the British empire learned.

Even Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is concerned about the problem. In a recent interview, Secretary Gates

said he asked General McChrystal about the implications of significant additional forces and whether the Afghans will see this as the United States becoming more of an occupier rather than a partner.

Secretary Gates also spoke last week about the failures of previous foreign forces in Afghanistan. He said one reason for their failures is that the Afghans concluded that they were there for their own imperial interests and not there for the interests of the Afghan people.

Mr. Speaker, the worst thing our Nation can do right now is to stumble into an occupation that the Afghan people do not want, one that will last many years, that will cost many lives and that will cost hundreds of billions of dollars that we can't afford.

We should not double-down on a strategy that hasn't worked. We need a brand new strategy, one that is based, among other things, on economic development for the Afghan people, on better governance and on improvements in policing and in intelligence. We need to have strategies that are the best ways to capture violent extremists, and we must have a clear exit strategy and a timetable for the withdrawal of our brave troops.

If we do that, if we can stop more people from dying—our troops and the Afghan people—we will truly be honoring the 3,000 who died on September 11, 2001.

#### COFFEE WITH THE CONGRESSMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, like many Members in the House, I spent a good part of August visiting with those who sent me here to Washington to represent them. I held seven "Coffee with the Congressman" meetings in all parts of the 19th Congressional District, and I was amazed at the tremendous amount of turnout.

Those who came to these meetings were upset about the direction that the government is taking their country. They want their voices to be heard in Washington. I told them I would bring their messages back to Congress with me, and hundreds of those attending our meetings filled out these message forms. As I said, I would like to read these comments on the House floor so that everyone in Congress will know how they feel. The people of the 19th Congressional District, and I think people all across America, share these same thoughts. So, for the next 5 minutes, you're going to hear from the people who came to the August 24 townhall meeting in Abilene, Texas, in their own words.

David from Abilene, Texas wrote these comments:

"My message to Washington is fix Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, VA, and welfare first. When they have

a good working system in place, then we can talk about taking on health care."

Claude from Tuscola, Texas had these comments:

"In my business, I have 19 employees, and I have reasonable health care coverage for all my employees, and I furnish this at no cost to my employees. Two of my employees cover their families at their expense. It is a very good policy."

Jerry from Abilene said, "I'm a 75-year old male, married 52 years with 6 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. This is all about the enormous debt I will be leaving for them. Please quit the spending, and look for ways to cut costs and improve our current system."

Charles from Abilene said, "You can't borrow your way out of debt. When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging. Whatever happened to common sense? Stop the cap-and-trade bill. It will raise taxes on all and not affect the global climate. Drill for oil in Alaska and our coastal waters, where there are proven reserves. If the health care bill is good enough for the taxpayers, it should be used by the President, Congress and the unions."

Charleye from Abilene said, "I do not want the government to control our health care. Please do not pass the proposed health care reform. Government spending is out of control. Please put a cap on spending in all areas. Not more bailouts—for anybody. Please listen, and stop spending our money now."

Bill from Abilene asked this question:

"Should this health care bill get passed, will all of the national politicians have to get on it too, or will you still keep your individual health insurance you have now?"

Trudy from Abilene said, "Please stand against all bills that are not read and debated. 'No' to government health care."

Tom from Abilene said, "You must do everything possible to prevent publicly funded abortions in the health care bill."

Maria from Merkel, Texas said, "People fail to see I am paying for this. Somebody has to. I'm tired of paying taxes toward things that people don't want to work for."

Lucile from Abilene says, "I do not want government control of my health care. This excess spending is ruining the U.S. Please be serious about your country and its citizens."

Grace from Abilene said, "No new taxes. We need insurance reform, not health care reform. The government bankrupted Medicare, not the recipients. No more bailouts. When did we start bailing out people that lived beyond their means in their high-priced homes?"

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Mike from Abilene: "I am a 27-year retired Air Force veteran. I am concerned about TRICARE for life and the